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- Melbourne Institute research team – Andrew Bevitt, Abraham Chigavazira, Nicolas Herault, Guy Johnson, Eion Killackey, Julie Moschion, Rosanna Scutella, Yi-ping Tseng, Nicole Watson, Mark Wooden
Context

- On the 3rd December 2007 a new Federal Government was elected.
- Within a fortnight, the new Prime Minister declared that homelessness was a ‘national disgrace’ and immediately identified homelessness as the Government’s highest social policy priority.
- $500m of additional funding for support services over four years (2009-2012), matched by State and Territory governments.
- $20 billion investment in 20,000 new social and public housing units, many of which were targeted to at risk and homeless persons.
- 11.4m to The National Research Agenda, by far the largest single investment in homelessness research in Australia.
Context

- $5m for a large scale, national longitudinal study that focused on housing instability and homelessness, subsequently called Journeys Home

  - Major step forward
  - For the first time sufficient funding to attempt what had never been done before: a longitudinal survey that tracked a national sample of individuals exposed to high levels of housing insecurity with rigorous sampling methods
Key Design Features

- 6-wave panel; 6-month intervals
  - First wave conducted in Sept to Nov 2011

- Sample
  - Drawn from Centrelink (social security) customers (3 sub-samples)
  - Stratified by region and clustered

- Only follow persons that respond at w1

- F2F (CAPI) interviews wherever possible
  - Telephone is an option

- $40 incentive per interview

- Ave. interview length =1 hr in w1; =30-40 mins in w2-6
SAMPLE STRUCTURE (NOT TO SCALE)

Centrelink income support population (4.7m+)

Homelessness flags (42,300)
- homeless
- at risk of homelessness

Study sample (~ 3,000)
- homeless indicator (~1/3)
- at risk of homelessness indicator (~1/3)
- vulnerable to homelessness (~1/3)

Target population (138,000)
- includes ‘vulnerable to homelessness’ group
## Response Outcomes, W1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% of total in-scope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-scope</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contact</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-response*</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed interviews</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL sample issued</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Refusal, incapable or contact made but no interview resulted.
## Response Outcomes, W2 to W6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 3</th>
<th>Wave 4</th>
<th>Wave 5</th>
<th>Wave 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed interview</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>1473</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>1454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of scope*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contact</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-response**</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (W1 resp’ts)</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Out of scope includes persons who: have died; are overseas; are in prison; or are in some other institution.

** This category includes outcomes classified as: refusal, termination, incapable, and contact made but no interview resulted.
## Homelessness Experience, W1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Group</th>
<th>‘Homeless’ (%)</th>
<th>‘At-risk’ (%)</th>
<th>‘Vulnerable’ (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homeless:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At time of W1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any time in prev 6 mths</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any time in life</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (N)</strong></td>
<td>581</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Content: Regular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal details</td>
<td>Some details only collected in W1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Includes voluntary work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and living arrangements</td>
<td>Includes accommodation calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services and networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and well-being</td>
<td>Includes substance use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with justice system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income and financial stress</td>
<td>Includes request to link to admin. records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking information</td>
<td>Includes gambling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Responses can be linked to admin income support data (94% consent rate).
## Survey Content: One-off Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 5</th>
<th>Wave 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Mobile phone use</td>
<td>Internet use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Diet</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Food security</td>
<td>Risk / time preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Personal control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with justice system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marital / relationships history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents’ marital history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education / care of children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research

- A few of examples using the panel dimension: investigating dynamics over the survey

  - Method: survival analysis to model exits from two alternative forms of homelessness: sleeping on the streets (‘literal homelessness’) and not having a home of one’s own (‘housing insecurity’)
  - Results:
    - Duration dependence has an inverted U-shape with exit rates initially increasing (indicating positive duration dependence) and then falling.
    - Exit rates out of both literal homelessness and housing insecurity fall with age.
    - Women are more likely than men to exit housing insecurity for a home of their own, but are less likely to exit literal homelessness.
Research

  - Method: IFE to control for time-invariant UH & lags to control for reverse causality
  - Results: homelessness does not affect substance use & substance use mostly does not affect homelessness, except risky drinking.
Research

- A couple of examples using the background information: investigating what drives people into homelessness the first time
  - Bi-variate duration modelling: timing of events to control for reversed causality and allowing the UH for each transition to be correlated.

- ‘Do Childhood Experiences of Parental Separation Lead to Homelessness?’ (Moschion & van Ours)
  - Results: parental separation increases homelessness in subsequent years for boys and girls if the separation occurred before the respondent was 12 years, only boys if >12.

- ‘Early illicit drug use and the age of onset of homelessness’, (McVicar, Moschion & van Ours)
  - Results: taking up cannabis use daily increases homelessness for young men but not women. The use of other illicit drugs has no additional effect on transitions into homelessness for either gender.
Research

- Food Insecurity and Homelessness in the Journeys Home Survey (Herault & Ribar).
  - Method: multivariate ordered categorical variable models of the association between homelessness and food insecurity; and dummy endogenous variable specifications
  - Results:
    - homelessness is associated with higher (worse) food insecurity for men
    - unconditional associations in the same direction for women, but no conditional association
    - meal consumption, and food expenditures do not show statistically significant (conditional) associations with homelessness
To sum up

- Journeys Home: What makes it unique?

1. Sample of at-risk individuals: lots of homelessness exp. but not all respondents! And other related things usually found in too few people to study: subs. use, mental health, incarceration.
   ⇒ Can identify the factors that precipitate the onset of homelessness

2. Sample from multiple locations, national coverage
   ⇒ Can understand how labour markets or housing markets affect entries and exits from homelessness

3. Longitudinal/panel dimension with high retention rate
   ⇒ Can control for both observed and unobserved individual heterogeneity (FE or RE models)
To sum up

- **Other pros**
  - The quality of the data is high: response rates, quality of variables on usually poorly measured characteristics (SU, MH, incarceration)
  - Very detailed information on current housing: can define different types of homelessness, test robustness to various definitions
  - Housing calendar to cover periods between surveys
  - Background information: onset of homelessness
  - Link to social security datasets

- **Cons**
  - It is not representative of the whole pop, nor of a well defined subpop (e.g. income support recipients)
Further Information


- How to get the data:
  
  https://melbourneinstitute.com/journeys_home/research/data_access.html
Classifying Housing Status

Has accommodation?

No

Primary homeless

Yes

Does accommodation meet minimum community standards?

No

Secondary homeless

Yes

Is the arrangement temporary?

No

Tertiary homeless

Yes

Home owner or in longer-term rental?

Stable housing

No

Marginally housed